

The Brethren Evangelist,

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ANOTHER CRITICISM.

We do not wish to discourage our contributors; we need them and their contributions; there are few enough, indeed, who contribute to these columns, and we do not wish to say anything that will, in the least, discourage them. Nor do we wish to be regarded as censorious in our judgment, or unnecessarily critical, when we criticise our contributors—we do not criticise, *them* but their productions, and we endeavor to do it in a friendly way and Christian spirit. We love them, and recognize their ability as teachers of the public, but for all this we cannot endorse every statement they make.

In the very able and spiritual article, "The Mystery of Godliness," by brother C. H. Balsbaugh, appear two statements which are likely to mislead, and we therefore take the liberty to correct, what in our opinion is incorrect, or misleading. He says: "No soul was ever made a Christian by baptism." We have no doubt that if Brother Balsbaugh were to interpret this sentence as *he* understands and *intends* it, the statement would be correct and in harmony with God's Word. But our readers do not have the benefit of his private interpretation, and the sentence as it stands, we repeat, expresses only a half truth, and is therefore misleading. How easy it would have been to add the word *alone* at the end of the sentence. "Baptism alone." Let us ask the question: Are souls made Christians *without* baptism? Will the brother please answer? If so, then baptism has no place in the economy of redemption. We might say, no house was ever built with a hammer and nails, but how many have been built *without* hammer and nails: Baptism *alone* does not make Christians, we admit, but the question is, Are souls made Christians without baptism? We admire the deep spirituality of the brother's productions, but it is nevertheless important that we take care of our theology.

Again, the brother says: "We reach the church through Christ and not vice versa." This is correct in part only. What is the mission of the Christian

church? Is it solely to take care of, and develop those who have come into the church through Christ? Is it not the mission of the church to *make known Christ*, to preach Christ through her regularly ordained ministry? It certainly is, and therefore Christ is found and reached through the church, as an instrument in God's hand for the salvation of souls. Does the heathen find the church through Christ? Are they not led to Christ *through* the church—the church which sends out her missionaries to *make known Jesus*. This is the great work and mission of the Christian church.

Brother J. C. Cassel writes an excellent article in reply to J. B. Wampler. It is full of good things, and furnishes comfort and encouragement to those who consecrate themselves wholly to the Lord. This one thing however, we have to say: Whoever the author of "Scotch Worthies" may be, we cannot credit the story that relates the raising of one to life who was dead forty-eight hours. Others may believe it; we do not censure nor condemn them for it, by no means. But we feel perfectly safe when we say that we voice the sentiment of the Brethren church in the statement that the *story is incredible*. It is very akin to, if not the legitimate outgrowth of faith in the doctrine of miraculous healing. We say not a word here against divine healing, it is not the subject under consideration. We trust Brother Cassel will not consider this criticism too severe; we make it in the spirit of brotherly love.

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE.

The time of the National Conference is drawing nigh. As yet we have had no communication from any one in reference to the work that awaits the conference of 1895. Perhaps we fail to realize the personal responsibility that rests upon each member of the Brethren church, and the stupendous results that may follow the action of these annual conferences. We do not know that the coming Conference will be a more important meeting than those of previous years, but we *do* know that very important business waits the action of the Conference of 1895. A glance backward over the past four years is sufficient to convince any one of the far-reaching results of every action of this National body. Let there be prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for that wisdom which is from above; let there be careful and thoughtful consideration on

the part of the whole church, as to what will be for the best interests of the church and the cause of the Master. It should be remembered that our church enterprises are comparatively new; that our Young People's Society, the S. S. C. E., our educational institution, and our literature are passing through their formative period, and therefore need special care and attention, and in dealing with each of them, we need to exercise great caution. What is the great need of the church today? What can the coming Conference do to supply this need? What agencies are most necessary to advance the cause of the blessed Master? What can we do for our school, our literature, our various organizations in the church? Let these questions be carefully and prayerfully considered, and we need not fear the result of the work of the coming Conference. Will not some of our brethren write along these lines of thought?

CAN IT BE DONE?

About ten days ago we sent out personal letters to the different pastors in the Brethren church, urging them to secure, if possible, a few subscribers at 75 cents to the end of the year. We had made an appeal through the paper for 400 subscribers, and we thought it would be an advantage to send out these personal letters. Brother Brown seems to doubt the propriety of this method of appeal. Perhaps it was not the right thing to do. We know that our pastors are interested in the work, and as a rule are willing to do their full duty and even more. Yet we cannot see any harm coming out of it. Those who have done all they can do, are not expected to do any more, and yet we feel that in the brotherhood at large much more could be done. Brother D. A. Hopkins who is *always* faithful in the discharge of every duty, upon receipt of our letter wrote: "Dear Brother: Yours of June 27, at hand. In reply I send you *four* names for the rest of the year. Find enclosed \$3.00." Of the 220 ministers in the Brethren church are there not 100, who with the thorough cooperation of their congregations, could do as well as Brother Hopkins? We believe it could be done. It is at least well to keep the matter before the minds of the people. Whose names shall we record next week?

Brother I. D. Bowman continues his good work in the city of "brotherly love."